

GOD'S PLAN

OR

OUR PLAN

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Crossroads Full Gospel  
International Ministries

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# GOD'S PLAN OR OUR PLAN

In this teaching, we will be examining various requirements for churches, ministries and individuals achieving success in the Lord. We will be looking at the primary ingredients needed to have a successful church, ministry or personal walk. And we will learn how vitally important it is to have a God-given plan so that we can each work towards the goal to which God has called us.

## BUILDING ON THE ROCK

*Background Reading: 1 Corinthians 3:10-15*

**The Lord Jesus Himself** indicated in Matthew Ch.16 that any work needs to be built on the foundation of “the rock.”

***MATTHEW 16:16*** *And Simon Peter answered and said, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”*

***MATTHEW 16:17*** *And Jesus answered and said unto him, “Blessed are you, Simon Barjona (son of Jonah): for flesh and blood has not revealed it (My true identity) unto you, My Father Who is in heaven.*

***MATTHEW 16:18*** *And I say also unto you, That you are Peter (“petros”), and upon this rock (“petra”) I will build My Church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail (succeed) against it.”*

**The rock to which Jesus was referring** was not Peter (translated from the Greek word “petros” which means “a fragment of rock”), but rather the Divine revelation that was imparted to Peter, by the Father, of Jesus’ true identity (as in verse 17). And we know this “rock” (translated from the Greek word “petra” which means “a huge, immovable mass of rock”) refers to Christ as the Living Rock, in Whom all truth is found. Only through Christ does God bring truth to us, for He is the door, the gate, and the pathway - and in Him is all our provision (John 14:6). Only through Christ, by the ministry of the Holy Spirit, can the truth of God’s Word be revealed, truth

which we digest so that our minds are renewed and we are set free to do God's will. Christ is the Living Rock, but only through daily fellowship with Him can we grow. Thus relationship with Christ and truth function together. Digested truth produces faith, which when applied according to God's will, brings the power of God to bear on situations and circumstances.

Essentially, "the rock" ("petra") on which the Church is built is Christ, Who is the source of all truth. Thus in a spiritual sense, this "rock" is the rock of revealed, spiritual knowledge, all of which is based on Christ and His identity, and is revealed to us by the Holy Spirit.

Wuest writes concerning "petros" and "petra" : *"The inspired writer of this letter (1 Peter), whose original name was Simon, received the Aramaic name of Cephas as a descriptive title of what he would some day be like (John 1:42). The A.V. translates, "Thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, a stone." The word "stone" is from the Greek word petros (ΠΕΤΡΟΣ) which means "a detached but large fragment of rock," and is used here metaphorically to describe Peter as a man like a rock by reason of his firmness and strength of soul. The name "Peter" is the English spelling of the Greek petros (ΠΕΤΡΟΣ) which is the word chosen by the Holy Spirit that would adequately translate the meaning of the Aramaic "Cephas." In answering Peter's great confession of His deity, the Lord Jesus says, "Thou art Peter (petros (ΠΕΤΡΟΣ)), and upon this rock (petra (ΠΕΤΡΑ)) I will build my church" (Matthew 16:18), . . . . petros (ΠΕΤΡΟΣ) meaning "a detached but large fragment of rock," petra (ΠΕΤΡΑ) "the massive living rock." The foundation of the Church of Jesus Christ is that massive living rock, the Son of God seen in His deity, acknowledged as such by Peter. Peter is but a fragment of that massive rock in the sense in which he speaks of believers as "lively stones," deriving their eternal life from the great Living Stone Himself (2:4, 5.)"<sup>1</sup>*

(underlines and reference added.)

**It is interesting to observe** that traditional Roman Catholicism states that there is only one true Church founded by Jesus Christ, and that this Church was and continues to be based on Peter's appointment as the first Pope, as evidenced, they claim, by their wrongful interpretation of Matthew 16:18-19. This began, they say, the Papal succession. The Popes, according to Catholic teaching, are

infallible in regard to teachings of faith and morality, and speak as the vicars of Christ on earth. The Catholic Church, incidentally, by Catholic teaching, is both superior to and the only reliable interpreter of the Bible! Now Peter was not “petra,” the massive rock on which the church was built, but “petros,” the detached fragment of rock. There is no evidence he went to Rome as the first Pope, for his ministry was “*unto the circumcision*” (the Jews - not the Gentiles) (Galatians 2:9). There is also no scriptural evidence that Peter was recognized by the early Christians as head of the Church. And as regards infallibility, Peter was rebuked by Paul (Galatians 2:11), “*the Apostle of the Gentiles*” (Romans 11:13), concerning his wrong attitude to the Gentile Believers. Thus the whole premise of the Papal succession descending from Christ’s so-called appointment of Peter is totally flawed and without scriptural justification.

**Jesus said, “*I will build My Church*”** (Matthew 16:18). This means that the Church belongs to Christ, and is headed up by Christ - not Peter or any other man for that matter (Ephesians 1:22-23; Ephesians 5:23). Christ is the Head of His Body, called, aptly, the Body of Christ. He is the Cornerstone, the chief and foundational structure around which everything else is constructed:

***1 PETER 2:5 You also, as lively (living) stones, are built up a spiritual house, (to be) an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by (through) Jesus Christ.***

***1 PETER 2:6 Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, “Behold, I lay in Zion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believes on Him shall not be confounded (disappointed or put to shame).” (Isa.28:16.)***

***EPHESIANS 2:19 Now therefore you are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God;***

***EPHESIANS 2:20 And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone;***

***EPHESIANS 2:21 In Whom all the building fitly framed together grows unto an holy temple in the Lord:***

***EPHESIANS 2:22 In Whom you also are built together (Jews and Gentiles) for (to become) an habitation of God through the Spirit.***

**There is no reference here** to any man heading the Church, much less a man bestowed with infallible wisdom. The Church as the Body of Christ is a spiritual entity consisting of all born-again Believers joining together to become a holy temple in which God dwells by the Holy Spirit. It is not made by human hands and is not led by human ingenuity.

The rock “petra” is spoken of again:

***1 CORINTHIANS 10:4 And did (the Israelites) all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock (“petra”) that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.***

In relation to this verse, “*Christ was the rock in the same sense that He is the vine. He was the source of all the support the Israelites enjoyed during their journey in the wilderness.*” <sup>2</sup>

Christ was in God the Word before He was born of a virgin, just as we were all in the loins of Adam before we were born. In this sense, as God followed the Israelites in the wilderness, because Christ was in God, then Christ followed them in Him.

This came through the Covenant God had made with man and because of Christ Who was to come. When the people put their trust in God, then they drank of Christ, the living water from heaven, even though He had not yet been born. This is a spiritual truth which requires spiritual understanding.

The rock in Horeb was struck by Moses so that water could pour forth to revive the Israelites. “*The rock in Horeb was typical of Christ the Rock; the Rock of refuge, salvation, and strength. Happy are they who stand upon this Rock. The cleft may be an emblem of Christ, as smitten, crucified, wounded and slain.*” <sup>3</sup> The water is symbolic of the living water which brings refreshing and renewal, as we draw water from the wells of our salvation - Who is Christ.

As we have learned, this “*Rock*” refers to Christ, the embodiment of all truth. In a general sense this rock (“*petra*”) is thus the rock of revealed knowledge, all spiritual knowledge which is founded on Christ and comes only by revelation of the Holy Spirit. It is upon this rock that the Church is built.

**Any work** (plan) **which is built upon this rock**, i.e. work (plan) that is commissioned by Jesus, will stand against all the opposition of the enemy, as of course it continues in God’s perfect will. Part of the revelation knowledge required to establish such a work is acquired through being able to discern the leading of the Spirit - knowing when and where a work is to be established and how it is to be carried out.

As we know, God will bless His people as much as He can, but many remove themselves, to varying degrees, from His blessings and protective hand. Ironically, they can do this even when applying Godly principles to that which they do - for often people and even ministries fail because they have the wrong plan, purpose and motive. Many ministries also find themselves in serious debt because they have the wrong plan, the wrong purpose, or have acted unscripturally. If this is the case, their pursuits will also be amiss. However, if anyone obtains God’s plan for their life, their ministry or their particular situation, and then follows the leading of the Spirit, they are guaranteed success in the Lord (along with persecution: (2 Timothy 3:12!). Anything less, however, will be a gamble, and will almost always produce casualties, despondency and unrealized expectations.

**These principles are evident** in an example which Jesus gave in Luke 6:47-49.

***LUKE 6:47 Whosoever comes to Me, and hears My sayings, and does them, I will show you to whom he is like:***

***LUKE 6:48 He is like a man which built a house, and dug deep, and laid the foundation on a rock: when the flood arose, the torrent struck that house but could not shake it: for it was founded upon a rock.***



***LUKE 6:49 But the one who hears My words and does not put them into practice is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. The moment the torrent struck that house, it collapsed and its destruction was complete. (N.I.V.)***

A **strong and firm foundation** is essential for any public work in the Lord, so that it may stand and not crumble when opposition arises. There are two elements which help to constitute this firm foundation - the plan and the timing.

### **THE PLAN AND THE TIMING**

**Some people partially obtain God's plan** for their life or their ministry, but are unaware that it is only part of that which they need to know. Many then forge ahead without proper preparation or outside God's timing, and wonder why they crash on the rocks of life, achieving no real success, according to the Lord's standards, in their life or ministry.

**In the Apostle Paul's ministry**, we can see a good example of the importance of having the right plan and also the right timing, i.e. of being able to discern the voice of the Spirit in these areas. During his second missionary journey, Paul and his team desired to evangelize Asia but the Holy Spirit would not let them do so. They then sought to enter Bithynia, another region close by, but again the Spirit prevented them from doing so. Shortly after this, the Spirit led them into Macedonia to preach the Gospel.

***ACTS 16:6 Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia,***

***ACTS 16:7 After they were come to Mysia, they assayed (tried) to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not.***

***ACTS 16:8 And they passing by Mysia came down to Troas.***

***ACTS 16:9*** *And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, "Come over into Macedonia, and help us."*

***ACTS 16:10*** *And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the Gospel unto them.*

A few years later, during his third missionary journey, the Spirit did lead Paul and His team into Asia where a great work was done for the Lord.

***ACTS 19:10*** *And this (work in Asia) continued by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.*

***ACTS 19:11*** *And God wrought (performed) special miracles by the hands of Paul (His servant)*

**God endorsed Paul's ministry** as he preached the Word with many signs and miracles - and the work in Asia was no exception.

However if Paul had not heeded the leading of the Spirit and had gone into Asia prematurely, his success would have been limited at the very least. Paul and his team would also have missed the opportunity to evangelize in Macedonia with the success that they subsequently experienced. If they had entered Macedonia later on, for example, they would have entered outside God's timing and wisdom and so would not have been walking in God's perfect will.

Looking back on Paul's ministry, we can see that it was obviously God's plan for Paul to preach the Gospel in Asia - but it was to be done in the Lord's timing and not man's.

**The success of Paul's ministry** was due to the fact that he was always led by the Spirit of God. Indeed his determined purpose was:

***ACTS 20:24*** *. . . that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the grace of God.*

So Paul, towards the end of his ministry, could confidently say:

**2 TIMOTHY 4:7 I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith**

**Paul's example** shows that we all need to have a Spirit-breathed plan so that, in all wisdom, we can proceed with what we are called to do. This not only relates to individuals but also to ministries and churches, for some "works for the Lord" are initiated purely from the mind of man. Other works may even be a product of the enemy's subtlety and deception. Or people may obtain part of God's plan and forge ahead, beginning in the Spirit and ending in the flesh.

Occasionally, but not very often, God will take hold of that which has begun in the flesh so that it may end in the Spirit. This would seem to be the exception, however, rather than the rule, and if God did intervene in this type of situation, it would be for the sake of His overall plan. Also, churches often fall into the trap of being "program mad." They run many and varied programs within their church structure, most of which are initiated without any real consultation with God, just so-called "prayer in Jesus Name." Their time is then taken up with unfruitful works as they press on from one failed project, according to God's standards, to another.

**Christians often go to a conference**, read a book or hear a tape or CD about someone else who has succeeded in the Lord through a particular God-given plan. Then after hearing or reading about this plan, they try to apply it to their own lives, ministries or churches. They assume that if God anointed this plan for others, then it must be right universally, and they too will succeed if they implement it. We need to be aware of this trap. People who have this kind of approach often find themselves despondent, or even shipwrecked, to some degree, in their Christian endeavours, simply because they take this pathway, not realizing that God's plan for each person, church and ministry is individualized.

Also, some people conduct programs in a particular unchanging manner, utilizing "tried and true" traditional methods. Tradition, however, will sometimes cause people to lose the Anointing of God, even though they may be sincere, honest, and Godly people, the Anointing being the signature of God's ownership and approval. Many who try to pattern their churches or lives on what others do or

have done, actually fail and fall by the wayside because they miss the leading of the Spirit in their particular situation.

**The Apostle Paul spoke about the care required** when one builds upon the foundation given.

***1 CORINTHIANS 3:10** By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation (the teaching of God's Word) as an expert builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should be careful how he builds (his life, church or ministry).*

**Do not misunderstand this.** We are not saying that God's principles change, but rather that He usually has a different plan for each individual, church and ministry. There may be likenesses within each plan, containing as they will the same principles of God. And there will be absolutes that are universally applicable. But essentially, each plan is given individual character. It is thus of supreme importance that we seek and find God's particular plan for each of our lives, rather than borrowing someone else's or going ahead according to our own desires, opinions and so-called "wisdom."

## **GOD WILL REVEAL HIS PLAN**

*Background Reading: John 16:13-15*

**It is essential that we seek God's plan** for our lives and ministries in order to develop spiritual hope deep within - in this case, an inner image of God's will. Once this spiritual hope is in existence, we then need trust to be added so that faith is developed - the faith needed to bring God's plan for our lives into existence by His power.

***ROMANS 12:1** I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God (by taking up your cross of self-denial and continuing in God's Word), which is your reasonable service.*

***ROMANS 12:2 And be not conformed to this world: but be transformed (changed) by the renewing of your mind (the way you think), that you may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.***

***ROMANS 12:3 For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God has dealt (given) to every man the measure of faith.***

***ROMANS 12:4 For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office:***

***ROMANS 12:5 So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.***

***ROMANS 12:6 Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of (our) faith;***

***ROMANS 12:7 If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; (N.I.V.)***

***ROMANS 12:8 if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully. (N.I.V.)***

From these scriptures we can see there are various ways in which Christians can serve God within the Body of Christ apart from the Five Fold Ministry (Ephesians 4:11) and the ministry of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:18-19). These areas of service depend on the giftings we have been given and the position in which God has placed us. We need to flow on a daily basis with the Holy Spirit in order to do as God directs in these areas. It is most important that we discover the particular calling the Lord has given to us and then proceed to fulfill our calling according to His Divine design.

**The calling on a person's life** may be revealed directly to that person by God. However, if the person concerned is unable to hear the Lord's voice in relation to this matter, their calling may be revealed to them by another who is able to discern the Lord's voice in this area, e.g. through a prophetic word.

Once a person is given information in regard to the nature of their calling, it is then that person's responsibility to judge whether the information was from God or not. The Word teaches us that we are to judge all things according to truth (1 Thessalonians 5:21; 1 John 4:1), and that we are to let a thing be established by two or three witnesses (2 Corinthians 13:1).

**One confirmation** that the information is reliable should be the witness in one's own heart. This may not come immediately, but only after the person spends time in prayer, seeking the Lord. The person concerned could also ask (or wait for) another who is trustworthy and anointed of God to help verify, in the Lord, what they have obtained, or to seek the Lord on their behalf regarding this matter. Alternatively they could seek another sign of confirmation which could take a day to come or even possibly a year, etc. Ultimately, however, the responsibility for seeking and discovering one's particular calling and then walking in that calling lies with the person concerned, and they must eventually have a witness in their own heart in regard to that calling. For this to happen, the Divine Nature must be more than just connected. It has to become enmeshed with our human nature - for it is only in the power of the Divine Nature that we can truly gain trust in that in which we believe. (Note: This trust relates only to the spiritual, e.g. truth and God's will for our lives). This of course then constitutes faith, God-given faith. We will then have a witness in our heart in regard to our calling, God having worked in us and through us, according to the measure of faith (Romans 12:3).

**God may only be able to reveal**, to some individuals, the particular church they should attend. If He gave them any more than this, at a particular point in time, they might become proud, unbalanced or fearful. To others, God can reveal much more of His plan for their lives and ministries because they will not become unbalanced by such knowledge. To others still, He will be able to reveal a little at a time over a long period. How much is revealed will

always depend on God's wisdom as He applies it to each individual, in their situation.

God could reveal to each of us the whole plan for our lives. He could reveal every detail, and show us how we are to fulfill His plan, step by step. He usually does not do so, however, because, as scripture states, "*the just shall live by faith*" (Habakkuk 2:4).

**By not disclosing too much to us**, the Lord promotes a walk of faith. If we knew all that was about to happen in our lives, this would not encourage us to seek and then walk by faith. Sometimes, however, God may give a broad outline concerning His direction for a person's future. Then as that person walks by faith, following the leading of the Spirit, God will reveal greater detail concerning that future plan.

**JOHN 16:13 . . . and He (the Holy Spirit) will show you things to come.**

*1 CORINTHIANS 2:9 . . . as it is written, "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for them who love Him." (Isa. 64:4)*

*1 CORINTHIANS 2:10 But God has revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searches all things, yea, the deep things of God.*

*1 CORINTHIANS 2:12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of (from) God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God (in His timing).*

Let us not then be impatient if, after earnestly seeking God's will for our lives, He only reveals to us a small part of the plan He has for us. Let us continue to rely on and trust in God's wisdom and timing, and allow Him to direct us in the way He desires. Doing this will bring victory and success to all concerned.

**Note:** It is also well recognized that the people who push too hard for information in these and other areas which rely on the operation of the gifts of the Spirit, often obtain wrong words and this

leads to wrong direction. The source of such erroneous information is either the people themselves (i.e. their own minds) or the enemy. We can thus be persistent in our enquiries of the Lord but we should never try to force the issue. Remember too that any bias on our part when we go to enquire of the Lord will also cause wrong “words” to come forth. We need to be open and to be neutral in our mindset if we are to hear the Lord’s voice and not contaminate the gifts. Always the Word of God in our hearts is to act as our filter and foundation.

## OBTAINING GOD’S ANOINTING

*Background Reading: Luke 4:18-19*

**The Anointing of God is all-important in the Lord’s service**, and this is the case concerning the work of an individual, a church or a ministry of evangelism, etc. Indeed the Anointing is the signature of God’s approval, and the means by which His purposes are accomplished. Jesus said “. . . *without Me you can do nothing*” (John 15:5), and without the Anointing or the presence of God accompanying our work, we will accomplish nothing of any eternal value, nothing that will count beyond this life. Our good works, done outside the Lord’s will and timing, through self-effort or to obtain temporal reward, will be burned up in the judgement of the next life (2 Corinthians 5:10; Matthew 16:27). Only works done according to the Lord’s will and in His strength will be held to our account (1 Corinthian 3:11-15). Only for these works will we receive reward.

**We each need a fresh Anointing from the Holy Spirit** for our individual work. This is His to give, and it will not come to us if we don’t seek the Lord and His plan for our lives. The Anointing cannot be “caught” or transferred. Rather it is imparted to Believers as the Spirit wills.

Many have acted foolishly out of frustration, eagerness, zeal, lust, etc, in an attempt to bring into existence “God’s plan” for their lives. In their own strength, they try to “make things happen” without the leading of the Holy Spirit. Some cannot hear the voice of the Spirit very clearly and become manipulative, deceiving themselves into thinking that their plan is from God when it is not.



We must understand that we cannot be the architect - we cannot draw the perfect plan for our lives for we are not qualified to do so. Only God Who is omniscient is capable of doing this. We are but the carpenters whom God wants to use to build His houses according to His exact specifications.

As carpenters therefore understand that we need to be craftsmen in our field in order to do the work the Lord has set before us. How do we become such craftsmen in the Lord's work? The Word tells us:

***2 TIMOTHY 2:15 Study (young and old) to show yourself approved unto God, a workman who needs not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.***

Because:

***2 TIMOTHY 2:20 . . . in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour.***

***2 TIMOTHY 2:21 If a man therefore purge himself from these (attitudes and deeds of the old man - sin), he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet (fit) for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work.***

**The Anointing of God** will only come upon our plans when He gives us His seal of approval. For example, council approval is needed before a house can be constructed. If a person builds without such approval, the house becomes an illegal work. The building is then worth nothing, for it cannot be legally occupied or sold.

In relation to God's plan for one's life or ministry, this plan must first come from God Himself - it cannot be initiated from us and then submitted to God for approval. Many Christians try to operate in this way. They think of a plan or a pursuit and then ask God to bless it, not realizing the plan must come first from the heart not the mind, having been placed there by the Holy Spirit Himself.

In this regard, Christians sometimes misinterpret Psalm 37:4, expecting that the Lord by His Word must give them the desires of their heart.

***PSALM 37:4 Delight yourself also in the Lord; and He shall give you the desires of your heart.***

These “*desires of your heart*” will only be fulfilled when the person delights themselves in the Lord, having obtained the desires themselves from Him. Approval of the Christian’s plans is then accompanied by a promise of Anointing as the person, ministry or church obeys God’s Laws and continues to be led by the Spirit. The desire of man’s mind (coming from his own thinking) and the desire of the flesh, however, are not things the Lord can bless or anoint.

**When scripture refers to a lamp or lampstand** (candle or candlestick in K.J.V.), it is usually speaking about light or illumination which, in a spiritual sense, can mean the revelation of truth. These terms can also refer to the Anointing of God.

The Book of Revelation (Revelation 2:1-5) speaks of a church which, we could say, had lost sight of its main purpose and was obviously moving outside of God’s will. The Lord warned them if they did not repent and return to their original foundation, He would remove their lampstand (or candlestick). In this context, the lampstand symbolized the corporate Anointing of God being present within that church - in other words, the fullness of the Spirit being manifested in public meetings when the church came together. This example and its symbolism still applies today.

***REVELATION 2:5 Remember then from what heights you have fallen. Repent - change the inner man to meet God’s will - and do the works you did previously [when first you knew the Lord]. Or else I will visit you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you change your mind and repent. (Amp.)***

**Unless a church has a lampstand which is lit**, it is dead to, or empty of, God’s corporate Anointing. The lampstand itself, as we have said, is a symbol of God’s corporate Anointing, and the light from the lampstand shines on the corporate plans of the particular church. Without the lampstand there can be no oil, and without oil, which always represents the presence of the Holy Spirit, there can be no light. It is the presence of the Holy Spirit which brings God’s will

and His truth to the churches. Without truth illuminated by the Holy Spirit, there can be no light in the churches. What then follows is the great irony of men and women doing their own thing in the darkness of their own thinking - and calling it God's will!

**It is one thing to have the light go out** but it is a far greater problem if the lampstand is removed. When present, the lamp could always be relit, but if the lampstand is removed, there is nothing to relight. If churches allow the oil to dry up, then they are in serious trouble. However for God to take the lampstand away means that the church is in a far worse state spiritually. The result of this will be a total lack of corporate Anointing. Such a church will not be effective in its ministry or its spiritual warfare.

Let us be clear about all this. God's Word is the fuel for the lit lampstand, and by the Anointing we will gain clear direction which will transport us into God's perfect will. Both the logos word and the rhema word are important here - the written word for a foundation of truth and wisdom, and the revealed word or living word to reveal the way and give spiritual direction and vision. It is by the Anointing we gain understanding. It is then the dwelling or moving in God's perfect will which secures His Anointing for service. In summary, it can be said that if a person (or church) follows the leading of the Spirit, then the guaranteed Anointing of God will be on all that they do. This is because they follow the Lord, and do not attempt to become the architects of their own destiny.

**In order to gain the Anointing of the Holy Spirit** at the highest potential possible in relation to God's plan for our life, we need:

1. To be baptized in the Holy Spirit
2. To have the Cross as the proper object of our faith
3. To have faith (God-given)

## HEARING THE VOICE OF THE LORD

*Background Reading: Acts 16:6-10; Acts 8:26-38*

We have seen from Paul's example the importance of hearing the voice of the Lord, even after the plan for our lives may have already been revealed. Indeed having the plan is only one of the elements needed to successfully fulfill the Lord's purpose for our lives.

**To help eliminate error** as one seeks to hear and understand the voice of the Lord, a person must normally be well versed in the Word of God. This is the only way to have our spiritual senses exercised so that we may be able to discern, in any basic way, between right and wrong - what is of God, what is of the enemy and what is of us. In other words, to hear the Lord's voice we need to understand the principles of God's Word really well, and to be living in them.

***1 CORINTHIANS 2:14** But the natural man (natural thinking man) receives not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned (understood).*

***HEBREWS 5:14** But strong meat belongs to them that are of full age (mature Christians of faith and love), even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised, to discern (to know the difference between) both good and evil.*

**The knowledge of the Word** also acts as a filter and thus a safeguard concerning information obtained via the gifts of the Spirit (e.g. the word of knowledge, prophecy, discernment of spirits). Anything which does not agree with the Word of God needs to be discarded, for the Word is the solid foundation of all truth and its principles do not change.

**As you become grounded in God's principles** and fellowship regularly with Him, you will come to know how the Lord thinks and acts. In this way you will also come to know God in a deeper and more intimate fashion. One benefit of this is that God will be able to

trust you, and so be able to reveal to you, little by little, His plan for your life.

**To achieve this may take time**, and dedication to serious study, fasting and prayer, all the while taking up, on a daily basis, your cross of self-denial. But it will be worth the effort. You will need to persevere patiently and in faith until you are able to hear from God clearly, filtering everything through the knowledge you have of the Word of God. You will need to stand against the enemy in the name of Jesus and put on all the armour that God has provided (Ephesians 6:12-18). Then in faith, cast all your cares upon the Lord, and allow Him to deal with them. Also, do not be afraid to have frank and open conversations with the Lord - for His door is always open, and He is always willing to listen to the faithful and humble in heart (Revelation 3:20; Hebrews 4:16; James 1:5-6).

Just as a ship cannot be steered either to the right or left unless it is moving, sometimes we must be moving in God, i.e. doing what God has already told us to do, before He will reveal further direction. We cannot just be stationary and expect the Lord to furnish us with detailed direction.

**So we need to continue moving on in God**, even in the basic things, and not to become impatient. It may take God some considerable time to turn our ships around, that is, if we have been moving in uncharted or presumptuous waters. The new birth is instant, but spiritual growth is not. Spiritual development takes time, perseverance, effort, commitment and most of all, the grace of His empowerment. In order to grow spiritually we must, above all, be committed to God and sensitive to His leading, yielding to Him in all things.

As a Christian grows in maturity they will, in most cases, be able to discern which way to go. This leading can come through a word of knowledge, a word of wisdom or simply an inner witness, all given by the Holy Spirit. There is, however, liberty in Christ, and God does leave large areas of our lives to our own choice and decision-making, providing we are operating within the general boundaries of His will.

We are therefore not saying not to step out in faith and expect God to support you. Indeed God sometimes says to us, "Step out, I am with you." But in major areas of decision-making, particularly involving ministry, if you do step out, make sure you are thoroughly prepared and equipped for the work. Above all, do not step out in

presumption - let it always be in faith, the faith that God gives you. And always remember that our ability to do great things for God comes through, and only through, Christ, via the grace of God which empowers us (John 15:5, Philippians 4:13).

**In order for His grace that comes through the Divine Nature to be fully available to us**, we all need the enriched Holy Spirit atmosphere that comes from the Spirit Baptism. This atmosphere can help us better absorb the graces and energies we need from God to become the person He wants us to be. We need these graces so that we can take up our cross and follow our Lord completely - in His strength and not ours (via willpower). Through His empowerment we gain the desire and then the strength to do His will, His work, with His passion and according to His leading.

**Remember too that concerning the affairs of life**, the Holy Spirit will direct Christians mainly through God's Word, for the Word should always be the lamp that lights our pathway. But at many a crossroads, we will also need a personal word from God. He may use a rhema word (a word of personal revelation) from the Bible or another person, a circumstance, direct communication to our spirit or a combination of these to reveal His will to us. If, unable to discern the voice clearly, we press on regardless, particularly in relation to ministry matters, we risk going in the wrong direction and losing the seal of God's approval on our work - the Anointing. So let us always humble ourselves before Him and seek His face. And no matter which method the Lord uses to give us personal direction, let us always prayerfully seek His will in our lives so we can fulfill the purpose He has for each of us (Romans 12:1-2; Ephesians 5:14-17).

Whatever this purpose involves, let us then ready ourselves according to God's plan and direction, believing for the Anointing we need to live for God, the Anointing without which we will accomplish nothing (John 15:5). Concerning all things of importance, always remember to bring them to the Lord "*with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit*" (Ephesians 6:18), acknowledging Him and seeking His direction. Then the Lord can make our paths straight, and we can fulfill the plan He has for our lives (Proverbs 3:5-6), for the Kingdom's sake, as well as our own.

May you have the victory in Christ. Amen!

For further information or teaching material to help you grow in the Christian faith, please visit:

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*FULL GOSPEL MINISTRIES*  
[crossroadsministries.org.au](http://crossroadsministries.org.au)

## NOTES



## NOTES

- 1 Wuest, Kenneth S, Wuest's Word Studies From The Greek New Testament, For The English Reader, 1 Pet.1:1.
- 2 Crossway Classic Commentary, 1 Cor.10:4.
- 3 Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary, Exo.33:12.

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to see people living  
in abundant life  
by the power of God  
through Jesus Christ"*



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